

The Postcolonial Museum: the Pressures of Memory and the Bodies of History.

International Conference

as part of the *European Museums in an Age of Migrations (MeLA)*

European Commission FP7-funded project

Organised by the

University of Naples "l'Orientale", MeLa RF2.

7-8 February 2013

Call for Papers

How to conceive of a “postcolonial museum” in the contemporary epoch of mass migrations, Internet and digital technologies? How to consider this space, practices and institutions in the light of the repressed histories, sounds, voices, images, memories, bodies, expression and cultures that the Occident has either denied or investigated as merely objects of traditional display practices? How to retrace and re-route museums perspectives taking into account the pressures of the denied bodies of European history repressed in its colonial past and present?

How to re-think memory and its means in the light of the *dissonant*, *asynchronous* and *displaced* memories coming to meet us from the unregistered present, and the future narration of contemporary migration?

How to re-open the museum space, in order to transform it from a place of national identity and the accumulative logic multiculturalism, to a site of contaminations, fluxes, border-crossings and migrating memories?

Focusing on the transformation of museums (meant as cultural spaces rather than physical places) into living archive through creation, participation, production and innovation we will also consider the following issues:

How does the museum reshape its cultural spaces in the light of the precarious conditions of work of the subjectivities working within its context? How are those subjectivities produced within this context?

How do new media arts participate in the complex transformation of cultural artwork?

How to work towards new forms of archiving — “affective”, sensorial, sound and fluid archives — even in conventional museum spaces?

MeLa Research Field 2 (<http://wp2.mela-project.eu/>), composed of Researchers from the University of Naples “l’Orientale”, is investigating these issues in order to contribute to a different comprehension of museums and archiving practices that respond to postcolonial and cultural studies in order rethink museums as mobile and “heterotopic spaces”, rather than stable places of institutional memory.

Invited speakers include:

Ursula Biemann, *artist, curator and researcher, Institute for Theory of Art and Design, Zurich, Switzerland.*

Tarek Elhaik, *anthropologist and curator, San Francisco State University, USA*

Viviana Gravano, *Professor of Arts, Academy of Fine Arts, Brera, Italy*

Achille Mbembe, *Professor in History and Politics, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa*

Fiamma Montezemolo, *Artist and Lecturer of Art Practice at Berkeley University and of Critical Studies at the California College of the Arts.*

Ebadur Rahman, *Chief curator of «Bengal Foundation» and Editor of Jamini-International Art Magazine, Dhaka, Bangladesh*

Françoise Vergès, *Reader at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmith College, London, and President of the Comité pour la Mémoire de l’Esclavage, France*

Submissions are invited in the following areas:

a) *Migrating Museums*

- Theoretical contributions to the study of museums and archiving practices in migrating, postcolonial and multicultural societies.
- Migration, border-crossings and the pressures of the denied and patrolled bodies of migrants: how to conceive and promote different European citizenships.

b) *From the single artist to participative museums and social technology.*

- Beyond institutional representation: practices of shared curatorial experiences in community museums and participative art.
- New forms of sociability (social participation/ digital technologies). The museum from an *institutional dispositif of modernity to a social technology.*

c) *Subjectivity and artists in the age of precariousness and immaterial labour*

- The role of the artist: political activism/cognitarian labour versus capitalism.
- Immaterial and affective labour in the museum: precarization and the production of subjectivities in arts practices.

d) *Museums, digital archives and new media arts*

- Digital and Internet technologies as alternative forms of archiving and “making memory”.
- New media arts and artworking: acknowledging the changed conditions of the production of cultural artwork in neo-liberal societies and transnational spaces.

e) *Alternative archiving practices.*

- From display, exhibition and collection practices to transforming and “affective” museum experiences.
- Art practices and fluid archives.
- Music and sound as a vehicle for different modes of experiencing and transmitting memory.

Instructions for submission

Abstracts of maximum 300 words for individual papers should be submitted to Mariangela Orabona (mariangelaorabona@gmail.com) by **14th Sept. 2012.**

The abstracts should include the following information:

- Title of paper
- Author name(s)
- Affiliation and position
- Email address
- Abstract
- Keywords (maximum 5)

Authors will be notified of the acceptance of their proposals by **24th Sept**; on that occasion they will receive the publication stylesheet. Accepted speakers will be required to submit a **full paper of minimum 4000 words in advance of the conference** to Mariangela Orabona **by 7th January 2013.**

Paper presentations at the conference should summarise the key arguments and findings of the full paper, which will be published in March 2013 by Ashgate Publishing.

There is no registration fee for the conference and buffet lunch will be provided.

Proceedings:

A selection of the conference proceedings, presented in person at the *The Postcolonial Museum: the Pressures of Memory and the Bodies of History* International Conference, in a volume to be published by Ashgate. The material is expected to be original and to have not been already published elsewhere. Young scholars are warmly invited to participate.

***MeLA RF2 Conference organising committee,
University of Naples “l’Orientale”:***

Prof. Iain M. Chambers (RF2 leader)

Prof. Lidia Curti (Honorary Professor)

Dr Alessandra De Angelis, Beatrice Ferrara, Giulia Grechi, Mariangela Orabona (MeLa researchers)